Met Office

NEWS

Thunderstorms then a windy weekend

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Thunderstorms in places today mark the end to the heatwave and herald a more changeable weekend, with a wet and windy Sunday for many.

Yesterday (26 July) saw the highest temperature recorded in the UK since July 1 2015 as the temperature reached 35.3 °C at Faversham, Kent and it's another hot day in the east and southeast of England today (Friday).

Will Lang, Chief Meteorologist at the Met Office, said: "The heatwave conditions are coming to an end but it's another hot day in the east and southeast of England today (Friday) with temperature expected to reach 36 or 37 °C in places. If conditions all come together here's a 50 % chance that we will break the July record temperature and a 20 % chance of a new all-time UK record high."

As expected, the hot weather is ending in a bang with thunderstorms already having broken out in eastern areas. There will be further intense thunderstorms this afternoon and evening across eastern parts of England and northeast Scotland into tomorrow, before the fresher conditions finally make their way east across the UK for the weekend.

Lang added: "Intense thunderstorms will break out this afternoon and evening (Friday) across eastern and northern areas and we have a Met Office Weather Warning in force for this.

"Whilst many places will remain dry, the thunderstorms could lead to torrential downpours in places with a much as 30 mm of rainfall in an hour and 60 mm in 3 hours. Large hail and strong, gusty winds are also likely and combined could lead to difficult driving conditions as a result of spray and sudden flooding.

"There will also be some showers up the western side of the UK this evening and this heralds a more changeable and windy weekend."

The weekend will be a contrast to the fine, settled weather most of us have been experiencing. Temperatures will have dropped somewhat but it will still be pleasantly warm in sunny spells. We can expect to see more rain at times pushing northeastwards across much of the UK and stronger winds than we have seen for some time.

Will Lang continued: "While Saturday will a pleasant, but breezy day in many places, we are in for a change on Sunday with a wet and windy day in stark contrast to what has been typical recently.

"We have already issued a Met Office weather warning for the impacts of wind and rain in southwest England and south Wales. Southerly winds will gust at around 35-40 mph and up to 50 mph for exposed coasts and hills. Rain will be most persistent over hills and parts of the Brecon Beacons and Dartmoor could see as much as 60-80 mm of rain."

This windier weather will make conditions around coasts, particularly in the southwest, rougher than we have seen so far this summer and the RNLI are advising people to check the weather forecast, tidal times before heading to the coast and

keep an eye on changes as conditions can change rapidly and catch people unawares both on the land and water.

Tony Wafer, RNLI Community Safety Manager, said: "If you are heading to the coast this weekend please find out where your nearest lifeguarded beach and ask the lifeguards for advice on conditions especially if you are going in the water.

"RNLI lifeboats and lifeguards have had 4 times as many rescues of inflatables so far this summer than they did last year. They can be very dangerous and we urge the public to respect the water when having fun using inflatables this summer. Please do not use inflatable toys or kayaks in offshore winds or big waves. If you are at a lifeguarded beach an orange windsock indicates offshore winds.

"Whether you are walking on the waterside or going on the water, always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back, and bring a means of calling for help which is easily accessible.

"If you find yourself unexpectedly in the water, float to increase your chances of survival and if you see someone else in trouble in the water, call 999 or 112 and ask for the Coastguard."

The highest temperature recorded so far this year is 35.3 °C at Faversham, Kent on 26 July. The highest temperature recorded in 2017 was 34.5° C at Heathrow on 21st June. Prior to this, the most recent heatwave prior to this was in July 2015 when temperatures peaked at 36.7 °C at Heathrow on 1 July, a temperature that is currently the July all-time maximum record. The all-time record in the UK is 38.5° C at Faversham on 10 August 2003.

The dry spell has been most prolonged in East Anglia and Southeast England. Most especially much of East Anglia and Cambridgeshire, extending through Essex into London and also around Bournemouth and Southampton. Parts of the Midlands have also been very dry. The last day of very widespread rainfall for East Anglia and the south-east was 29 May.

A Level 3 heat-health watch has been issued in association with Public Health England, for a large part of England. The Heat Health Watch Service is designed to help healthcare professionals manage through periods of extreme temperature.

Hot weather, especially when prolonged, with warm nights, can have effects on people's health and on certain infrastructure. To aid preparation and awareness before and during a prolonged hot spell, a heatwave plan has been created by Public Health England in association with the Met Office and other partners. It recommends a series of steps to reduce the risks to health from prolonged exposure to severe heat for:

- The NHS, local authorities, social care, and other public agencies
- Professionals working with people at risk
- Individuals, local communities and voluntary groups

Dr Thomas Waite, Consultant in Health Protection at Public Health England, said: "Temperatures are likely be high in parts of England this week, which may leave older people, young children and those with long-term conditions, including heart and lung diseases, struggling to adapt to the heat. So keep an eye on friends and family who may be at risk.

"To beat the heat, try to keep out the sun from 11am to 3pm, walk in the shade if you can, apply sunscreen and wear a hat if you have to go out in the heat. Also try to carry water with you when travelling."

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